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WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

* Security Council calls on Zaire to halt forcible repatriation of Rwandan and Burundian refugees.

* UNHCR condemns Zaire's violent expulsion of refugees.

* Guyana requests international assistance to deal with major spill of gold-mine waste containing cyanide.

* Secretary-General recommends General Assembly renew mandate of MINUGUA until 18 March 1996.

* Secretary-General recommends increased United Nations system cooperation to strengthen capacity-building of democratic institutions.

* Committee on Elimination of Racial Discrimination calls for the provision to Bosnia and Herzegovina of all means to protect itself in accordance with United Nations Charter.

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The Security Council today called on the Government of Zaire to reconsider and halt its declared policy of the forcible repatriation of refugees to Rwanda. In a statement by its President, Nugroho Wisnumurti (Indonesia), the Council expressed concern at Zaire's forcible repatriation of Rwandan and Burundian refugees and the increasingly tense situation in the region. It called on Zaire to honour its obligations to the refugees, including those under the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees of 1951.

The Council said the nations which had accepted refugees from Rwanda and Burundi had made an important contribution to peace and stability in the region, especially in view of the genocide which took place in Rwanda and the

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* **Revised version: Yesterday's Daily Highlights (DH/1963) was an inadvertent reprint of Friday's Highlights.**

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possibility of further bloodshed in Burundi. The Council also noted the commitment of the Rwandan Government to take the necessary steps to make possible the safe return of its nationals as soon as possible.

The Council expressed support for the Secretary-General's decision to send the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Sadako Ogata, to the region to engage in urgent discussions with the Government of Zaire to resolve the situation. It encouraged all governments in the region to cooperate with the High Commissioner for Refugees to achieve the voluntary and orderly repatriation of refugees.

Mrs. Ogata is expected to begin her mission this weekend, according to a United Nations spokesman.

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The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has condemned the violent expulsion of thousands of Rwandan and Burundian refugees from camps in eastern Zaire. Carrol Faubert, the UNHCR's special envoy for the Great Lakes region, has expressed deep concern over reports of looting, beatings and other abuses allegedly committed against the refugees.

The UNHCR has opened two reception centres in Rwanda to receive incoming refugees and another facility at Burundi's border. UNHCR trucks are being made available in Rwanda and Burundi to transport the refugees to the reception centres. Ms. Faubert said the UNHCR stood ready to open a dialogue aimed at resuming a voluntary repatriation programme for all of the region's two million refugees. In Burundi, UNHCR representatives are negotiating with Burundian officials to put up reception centres for the returnees unable to proceed to their villages because of ethnic fighting.

Meanwhile, the expulsion of refugees from Zaire continued today but at a lower rate than yesterday, according to a United Nations spokesman. The number of refugees fleeing camps to the hills of Zaire to avoid forced repatriation has increased, up to an estimated 100,000 people from 60,000 yesterday. The Government of Rwanda is processing people at the border and has arrested or detained a small number of those on suspicion of having participated in war crimes. In addition, more people are reported to be coming to UNHCR for voluntary repatriation.

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Guyana has requested international assistance to deal with a major spill of gold-mine waste, according to a United Nations spokesman. An estimated 1.25 million cubic metres of mining waste containing cyanide has entered two rivers since Saturday.

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The Pan American Health Organization has dispatched an environmental engineer to the region. The joint environment unit of the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs is working with the United Nations Development Programme in Guyana to generate contributions to respond to the emergency and also to help coordinate the response.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has recommended that the General Assembly renew the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Verification of Human Rights in Guatemala (MINUGUA) for another six months until 18 March 1996. In a report to the General Assembly, he also recommended that the Mission be provided additional resources to ensure adequate verification of the human rights aspect of the Agreement on Identity and Rights of Indigenous Peoples of 31 March 1995.

The Secretary-General said MINUGUA continued to fulfil the verification mandate entrusted to it and to assist in strengthening national institutions and entities responsible for the protection of human rights. Furthermore, the Mission's presence was having a positive impact in promoting respect for human rights and the rule of law, as well as increasing confidence in political participation.

Although the target date of signing a final peace agreement in August 1995 could not be met, he said negotiations had regained momentum and the Government of Guatemala and the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG) had shown the political will to move forward. Thus, he remained convinced that the United Nations should continue to assist them in reaching the earliest conclusion of an agreement, and the international community should continue to lend its full support to the Guatemalan peace process.

The Secretary-General also said the 31 March 1995 Agreement on Identity and Rights of Indigenous Peoples was a very auspicious development at the beginning of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People. He trusted its full implementation would inspire similar efforts elsewhere.

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The Secretary-General has recommended that the United Nations Secretariat and all agencies increase their cooperation in the area of institution-building and democratization, in particular through strengthening capacity-building of democratic institutions. In a report to the General Assembly dated 7 August, he said the aim should be to develop an expanding network for policy development and programme cooperation, involving United Nations agencies, bilateral donors and interested professional organizations. This new framework for coordination should involve both the headquarters level and the regional and field offices.

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The Secretary-General noted that elections were necessary but not sufficient to ensure the durability of a democratization process. As far as electoral assistance was concerned, it had become clear that there was no single formula to ensure a successful election. Electoral assistance must be guided by the wishes of the Member States concerned and the practical realities of each electoral situation, keeping in mind the overall goal of long-term capacity-building.

Experience had shown that an influx of large numbers of observers for election day may be unnecessarily costly and less effective than the deployment of a smaller number of observers who arrive in the country prior to registration and remain for the entire electoral process. In the future, he said, greater emphasis would be placed on long-term observation and the strengthening of national observer networks rather than on the deployment of massive numbers of international observers around election day.

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The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination has urgently called for the provision to Bosnia and Herzegovina of "all means to protect itself in accordance with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter".

In a decision taken in Geneva by a vote of 11 in favour to one against with four abstentions, the Committee called upon the international community and, in particular, all European States, to render assistance to refugees and detained persons directly and through the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Committee of the Red Cross and all other organizations involved.

The decision will be transmitted to the Secretary-General, the General Assembly and the Security Council.

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